

Unwrapping pop culture's hip and hidden treasures

By Whitney Matheson

« Showtime airs new slices of 'Life' | Main | Today in 'Dark Knight' news ... »

The magical return of Rock-afire robots



Like this story? Share it with Yahoo! Buzz

If you grew up near a Showbiz Pizza Place in the '80s, there's a good chance you remember the "house band," a group of robot rockers called the Rock-afire Explosion. Pop reader Lora told me about this guy in Chicago who is trying to reassemble the animatronic band in his garage.

"Since first purchasing Rolfe deWolfe, a ventriloquist wolf robot who provided comic relief by speaking through a bird puppet named Earl Schmerle, in 1998, (Michael) Garay's collection has turned from hobby into full-on obsession," *Time Out Chicago* reports. "Ten years later, Garay owns approximately 20 android accompanists, all in different stages of completion, and estimates he's sunk $25,000 into what was supposed to be a one-time purchase."

Michael isn't the only Rock-afire fan out there. People like him exist all over the country, and there are fansites, conventions and YouTube videos to prove it. It's kind of weird to see clips like this one, which show Rock-afire reprogrammed to perform an **Evanescence** song. Apparently, a few pizza parlors still have the working band as well.

"One of my favorite childhood memories was going to Showbiz with my family on special occasions -- birthdays, straight A's, one very odd Mother's Day," Lora says. Long live robot rock 'n' roll!

Posted at 11:09 AM/ET, 05/07/2008 in Music | Permalink

THE MAGICAL RETURN OF ROCK-AFIRE ROBOTS

(USA Today Pop Candy - May, 2008)

Date of Origin: 2008
Archived: 5-24-08
Submission by Menutia
Version 1.0

